1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

stayed out hunting a total of ten unproductive days, Hans sixteen days, and Old Man twenty days—a total of forty-six man days in which only one moose was killed.

Harry Lang's journal for 1940 was analyzed to discover the number of days spent hunting and the amount of game killed. The figures are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5. ACTIVITY OF THREE MEN IN HUNTING—1940

Date	Number of Persons	Results
April 13		"No luck"
April 14		One caribou
May 1		"4 or 5" caribou
May 4		"No luck"
May 8	3	Four caribou
May 9	3	One caribou
May 10-11	3	One beaver, one moose
May 16-18	1	One beaver, one moose
May 23		No luck
May 24		One caribou
June 3-4		One moose
June 17		No luck
July 5-6		Two moose
July 9		One bull moose
July 11		One bull moose
August 8-14	3-5	Three bull moose, four goats
August 27-31	3-5	Three bull moose

The brief period studied reveals both more time invested in hunting and greater success in this activity than were manifested during the term of field work. An explanation for the former hunting may lie in the fact that during the winter of 1939-40, Harry's settlement ran short of food.[1] As a result, it seems likely that not enough time could be spent trapping to permit a leisurely summer in Lower Post. Hence the summer was utilized for hunting, the meat being important for seeing the family through till fall.

Caribou are generally sought after the beginning of December, when small flocks begin to descend from the mountains to river valleys. They are far easier to hunt than moose, and it is often possible to shoot several on the frozen river without moving far from the settlement.

A rabbit hunter can operate in a radius of a mile or two from camp and seldom spends more than two or three hours daily at his work. With a .22 caliber rifle and a game bag or packsack, the hunter starts in the late afternoon, seeking a place where black spruce grows thickly. Walking carefully, he peers under the brush and watches spaces between trees distant from him. In 1945, a man generally managed to return with one or two of these animals after two hours in the bush. Rabbits are skinned and cleaned by women, to whom the hunter turns over the catch when he returns to camp. Rabbit hunting is usually done by

[1] See below, p. 103.

1: Honigmann K-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

adolescent boys and men, although it is also attempted by any girl old enough to handle a gun. 224 252

Porcupine are either shot or clubbed to death. Lacking a gun, Paulette Donnelly once used down a jackpine on which she had seen a porcupine sitting. As the tree fell and the animal began to wobble off, Paulette went in pursuit and clubbed it with the back of her ax. After a porcupine is killed the hunter builds a fire and burns off the quills. The animal is then laid on a carpet of brush for butchering. A cut is first made on the ventral surface of the body, extending from the neck to the anus. The stomach and intestines immediately fall from the body cavity. The small intestine is carefully cut free, in order to preserve its blanket of fat. This organ resembles a string of link sausage, and is emptied by being pinched downward from the junction of each link. The heart, liver, and kidneys are left in the carcass, which is packed back to camp with the small gut.

The duck and goose are hunted in spring and fall, and the spruce hen and willow grouse, throughout the year. Chicken hunting, like rabbit hunting, is generally motivated by the need for meat but girls frequently kill these birds while tending to the family's rabbit line. Generally the birds are plucked immediately after being killed, when the feathers are easy to remove. Success in hunting chicken depends largely on encountering a sizable flock of feeding birds. A man may also return to a spot where he killed several spruce hens to shoot those which escaped but which remained in the neighborhood. With luck favoring him, a hunter will sometimes return from a fowling trip with six to nine birds. When a man's bag is as large as this, he may send some of his catch to other families in camp. 223 [221] [252]

Most fishing is done in lakes and rivers before the formation of ice. The commonest fish caught for food are the grayling, river trout, lake trout, and jackfish. Fishing trips are motivated by a desire for fresh fish as a change from meat, or by the necessity of securing nourishing food for dogs. Fishing is done with a baited or fly hook and with nets. In the fall, when fish travel into a slough to spawn, a net may be strung at the entrance to such a place. Nets are long with floats about eight inches long and four inches in diameter prepared from spruce wood. Flat stones about two inches wide and three inches long are selected for sinkers. The stones are tied to the lower end of the net at ten inch intervals. Fish line is used for this purpose, the rock being secured in a running noose and the upper end of the line fastened to the net with a double overhand knot. Several feet of manilla rope are added to each end of the net and secured on shore to a piece of drift wood or an overhanging willow. Sometimes fish are driven out of a slough into a net by shooting, the concussion sending several stunned grayling and trout to the surface. When several hours will be required to transport fish to camp, they are often gutted at the fishing site. If fish are to be carried only a short distance, they are strung through the mouth and gills on a thin willow shoot, the ends of which are then twisted together. Near camp a man or boy may fish alone. Generally men only use lines, but either sex may set a fish net. In the fall, a whole family sometimes travels several miles to a likely fishing spot and spends the day there eating fresh roasted fish. Often a family or two men will travel up to ten or fifteen miles to a fish lake, camping there for several days or a week and accumulating a dozen or two large jackfish and lake trout. 226 [221] 227 [252]

Only the rabbit is trapped exclusively for food, setting and visiting rabbit snares being 224 462

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

inadequate. A generously estimated intake of 1850 calories a day is insufficient for work which requires from 2500 to 3000 calories for both sexes. Vitamin C is almost completely lacking; the amount of vitamin D received in the diet is low and can hardly be supplemented by the weak winter sunlight. Such minerals as calcium, iron, and copper are also poorly represented. So long as a mixed diet can be maintained, a proper balance of carbohydrates and proteins is assured, but in winter, personal experience revealed the intake of fats to be too low. As a result, considerable sugar is craved and eaten. In summer the diet is more nutritional and the only deficiency seems to be in vitamin D, but this can then be supplemented by sunlight. It may also be pointed out that the early months of living in the bush are associated with a somewhat better balanced diet than the later months, when most of the luxury items have been exhausted.

Moose and caribou meat are the principal preserved foods. A few fish are sometimes dried in the fall but seldom last more than a few weeks. Berries may be preserved by boiling and storing in unsealed glass jars, but they do not last until winter. A few families were reported to wash up dried low bush cranberries with bear grease in the fall for winter consumption.

In summer and early fall, when fresh meat is in danger of rapid spoilage, it is preserved by drying. The meat is boned and cut into a single slice, about a half-inch thick and from eighteen to thirty inches long. These slices are hung over a pole, which is supported between two forked sticks, and exposed to the sun. Underneath the meat a small smudge fire is built to keep away the flies. The meat dries in a day or two and is then removed to the house or cache, where it may be hung or stored in empty flour sacks until eaten. A few rabbits are sometimes also dried in this way, the skin and viscera being removed and the animal hung up by the hind legs until dry. In late fall, when flies have disappeared, larger pieces of meat are hung outside the cabin without a fire and left to dry or freeze. If game is killed in winter, only sufficient meat for a few days is brought into camp, the rest of the animal being left in the bush on a platform cache. People return to such a "meat place" when more meat is needed. Food preservation is the work of women.

In order of frequency, meat is prepared by boiling, frying, and broiling. Staples, such as dry fruit, potatoes, rice, and oatmeal, as well as the fats and heads of trout, are always boiled. The water is not poured off these foods but eaten. In camps as well as in the winter settlements where there are stoves, meat and fish are both fried or broiled. Porcupine is generally roasted but is also boiled. When porcupine has been cleaned of hair and gutted, with the kidneys left in place, it is split lengthwise on either side of the backbone. The quarters are sawed off and the backbone is cut into three sections. The meat is skimmed after it has cooked or roasted. Moose tongue, rabbit and beaver meat are also usually boiled.* The heads of the moose, caribou, and porcupine are always roasted before an open fire and are regarded as delicacies. Moose bones are split and the marrow used in the preparation of soup. At a moose kill young people often throw the lower leg bones into a fire to cook the marrow, which is then scraped out of the split bone and eaten. When broiling meat, a portion of the kidney or cabin fat is often simultaneously roasted and portions of meat and

* The same information has been reported for the Mackenzie River Indians. Phillips, Unpublished Manuscript [Yukon].

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

fat eaten successively. Some people smear cold lard on lean fried meat in order to improve the flavor. The large colon of the moose is cut open, scraped, washed, and then fried in lard. If lynx is eaten, it is generally boiled with a change of water. Berries are eaten raw and also cooked with sugar. Eggs are both fried and boiled.

Flour is generally prepared in the form of bannock, which is also known as baking powder bread, less often as yeast bread. In making bannock two tablespoonfuls of baking powder are added to two cups of flour with a half teaspoonful of salt (hunters usually carry flour already mixed with these ingredients for making bannock). Two tablespoonfuls of sugar are optional for the dough, as is a teaspoonful of cinnamon. One cup of water is added to the dry ingredients, and the mixture stirred with a spoon. The dough is then formed into a single round loaf, which is usually scored, or into individual round rolls, about two inches in diameter, and placed in a frying pan to fry in deep fat until brown on both sides. After both sides have browned, the bread is crowded on the edges until these are brown. Sometimes bannock is baked in a moderate amount of fat in a moderately hot oven, the loaf being basted with melted shortening before closing the oven. At an open fire bannock may be either fried or baked. In baking, the frying pan is set at an angle in front of a hot fire so that the heat is reflected on the dough, which has been spread with melted shortening. An even browning is assured by revolving the loaf so one part browns. Not until baking powder has been substituted do people trouble to make yeast bread. The bread is baked in an oven or, if a stove lacks a baking compartment, in a straight kettle set on top of the stove and surrounded with hot rocks.

Special foods are not prepared for children. During the day they may ask for bannock and spread it with sugar, cooked berries or, when available, jam or butter. In summer a favorite with children is "ice cream," which they prepare from soap berries placed in a bowl and beaten with a wet spoon. Three parts of sugar are added to one part of berries and the mixture beaten until a thick froth appears. Children up to adolescence are also fond of fixing a mixture of dry milk and sugar added to a little water; the thick cream that results is eaten with a spoon. In winter "ice cream" is sometimes said to be made of powdered milk mixed with snow and sugar.

Throughout the year people eat three main meals a day, one upon arising, another toward the middle of the day, and one in the evening. If the family expects the return of one of its members late at night, tea and other food is often kept warm awaiting the person. In a cabin, meals are eaten from a table; in tents, food is eaten on the ground. Old Man reported that his present wife had to learn to eat from a table. For a long time she refused to do this but ate alone on the floor of the cabin while her husband and his children ate from the table. She still does all her sewing and other work on the floor, setting her sewing machine on an overturned box. A family always eats as a unit. Only on most packing expeditions was sexual division of eating observed, the men and boys cooking their own food at their own fire, and women at another. Unless they are ill, people eat heartily rather than sparingly but without hurry or noise. The upper part of the body may be slightly bent toward the plate, but a person does not crowd over his food. Meals are accompanied by conversation and care is always taken not to waste food. Only inedible scraps are fed to dogs.

6: Honigmann E-3 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

fish-eating ducks made them unpopular for food and the raven was deemed to be inedible. Porcupine and bear brains exercised a debilitating effect on the body and hence were not used in preparing food. In periods of severe hunger the poorer tasting foods and, perhaps, even the magically dangerous animals like mink and otter would be consumed. Under the stress of starvation selectivity broke down to a point where moosehide might be eaten. Although strong repugnance governed the consumption of human flesh,* unproductive periods accompanied by severe hunger sometimes led to cannibalism. Tales of confirmed cannibals occur in oral tradition. There is the story of a man widely feared for his perverted appetite, which led him to regard human beings as game. He ate anyone he came across, including his wife and several children. Three sons, however, he spared because they could work for him. Indeed, they specialized in the task of killing men for their cannibal father after the latter grew too old to hunt. Approaching a camp this man would say, "You can kill birds for me now." Then, while the boys went off he started water boiling in readiness for the meat that they would bring back. The tale ends with the old cannibal and his sons meeting death at the hands of an intended victim who possessed exceptionally strong supernatural power.

Edible foods were both prepared for immediate consumption and preserved to be eaten at a later time. Boiling constituted the primary technique of cooking. Some meats, like lynx, were double boiled, the first water being discarded. After the meat had been cooked a "soup" was customarily made, onion greens or animal blood being added to the stock. "Soup took the place of tea in the old days. When people had finished with the meat they always drank the water in which the meat had been cooked." Several methods of boiling were known. Water placed in a basket tightly woven from split spruce roots could be brought to a boil with the aid of hot stones picked from ashes with spruce brush and blown free of dirt. The meat, cut in small pieces, was dropped into the boiling liquid. These vessels sometimes rested on the ground but were also supported a foot or so above the earth on a circle of wooden pegs. Another way of bringing water to boil is reminiscent of the Plains Indians. A pit was dug in the soil and lined with semi-tanned skin or, less commonly, with grass. Hot stones constituted the source of heat and keeping the top of the pit covered with spruce bark helped to retain the steam. Caribou and moose stomachs supplied another variety of container in which food could be cooked. The organ was first carefully warmed in front of the blaze to make it dry and hard. Later it might be suspended over the fire to cook the contents. Vegetables boiled included lily bulbs, muskeg apples, and fern roots, the latter only after being stripped of their outer bark. Dried wild rose petals were "powdered" before cooking. Mashing berries during cooking was common. People sometimes broiled meat by suspending it from a broiling stick or from a bone hook that itself hung from a piece of babiche line. Pieces of fat exposed near the heat of fire provided grease, the drippings being caught in bark containers. "Sometimes, when bear fat was rendered alongside a fire, some of the melted grease was taken and mixed with a little snow. It started to foam up just like ice cream." In summer moose horn could be warmed close to the fire and the "velvet" then scraped off and eaten. Only under exceptional circumstances did the Indians eat raw meat or fat.

*See below, p. 91.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Dease River

the beaver men shaped double-tined points for fish spears. The Indians also relied on weirs, while gill nets were set from canoes in summer and under the ice in winter. In the latter season, before a net could be set the ice had to be broken with an ice chisel that was constructed from caribou horn. Dip nets could not be recalled. Angling occurred in summer and winter. Hooks consisted of two splinters of beaver bone crossed and lashed in the form of an x. Fish poisons do not appear to have been known. 226

In addition to the foods already mentioned the Dease River people readily ate brown bear, porcupine, mountain goat, rabbit, ground hog, squirrel, and gopher. Whether nutritionally important or not, the body louse, foetal animals, moose milk, and sheep milk were also consumed. The eyes of the moose and caribou provided delicacies especially reserved for children. Geese, ducks, loons, swans, ptarmigans, spruce hens, and willow grouse found a welcome part in the diet. Fish eggs did not remain neglected. Animals rarely eaten or reserved for periods of scarcity included the grizzly bear, owl, lynx, and whiskey jack. In the category of never eaten animals occurred the fox, muskrat (perhaps the pack rat is indicated?), fisher, otter, mink, wolverine, wolf, dog, frog, eagle, hawk, crow, and woodpecker. Vomiting is said to have followed any attempt to eat otter, mink, wolverine, or wolf. Mud and lily bulbs remained outside of the diet. Although consumption of human flesh rested under strong prohibition, in periods of great hunger cannibalism admittedly took place. An apprehended eater of human flesh might be isolated from his community for as long as two years. Beliefs that cannibalism led to illness or produced a craving for human flesh were denied. No evidence of ceremonial cannibalism could be obtained. 262 266

A large proportion of meat as well as eggs were boiled with the aid of hot stones, in containers of either birch bark or woven spruce root. Caribou and moose stomachs occasionally served as cooking vessels, being hung to one side of the fire. Pit cooking could not be recalled. The water in which meat had been boiled provided a soup, to which onion greens or blood might be added. People prepared animal heads, intestines, and fish on a broiling stick but did not roast food in hot ashes. Rabbits and fowl on isolated occasions might be eaten raw, as when long rain had soaked all available wood thus making it impossible to kindle fire. An informant offered two recipes for "ice cream." The first variety consisted of a mixture of grease, cranberries, and snow. In the second process cranberries or dry soap berries were added to bear or beaver grease in a kettle and the whole mixed together. Snow did not enter the compound but today sugar makes a necessary additional ingredient. 252 [415]

Women preserved a variety of meats, fish, and berries through sun drying. Pemmican, prepared from stone-pounded meat with grease and berries added, was stored in viscera and birch-bark baskets. Caches held the preserved food. A simple type of cache consisted of a 12-foot pole lashed onto a tree with willow-bark line. After wrapping the meat in hide or a sheet of bark, it was suspended about three-quarters of the way up the pole. A ground cache consisted of a box-like structure of poles surrounded with rocks and covered with poles weighed down by additional stones. Men also constructed four-pole shelter caches and elevated them up to 12 feet above the ground, the poles being lashed together with babiche. A double layer of poles, one running at right angles 251 417

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Tsalona
Frances Lake

animals eaten included the muskrat, lynx, rabbit, ground hog, marten, and body louse. Ground hog, the informant pointed out, furnished a far more important source of food in the aboriginal period than did the rabbit. Women preserved a large number of ground hog from the fall for winter consumption. The fox and weasel were trapped for fur alone, while the skunk remained severely left alone. Birds caught for food included the owl, goose, duck, grouse, ptarmigan, swan, crane, and spruce hen. The eagle, crow, hawk, and loon played no role in the diet. Any successful hunter of large game, after butchering his prize, returned to camp and announced his good fortune, thus stimulating men and women to set out to secure a share of the meat. In general, butchering involved first the removal of an animal's skin, severing the limbs, and removing the viscera. The carcass could then be divided further.

Techniques of fishing included spearing with bone-pointed spears (the bone coming from the ankle of a moose), angling with bone points bearing moose-meat bait, and trapping with a fish weir. In winter weirs could be set in fast creeks that never froze; there were undoubtedly a number of such creeks on the Rocky Mountain slopes in the Tselona country. People did not fish with the aid of torches nor did they employ snares. Fish eaten included the grayling, sucker, ling (loche), whitefish, and trout. Salmon did not extend into this region.

Only when fire could not be provided did the Indians venture to consume raw meat. Hot-stone boiling in bark vessels served as the standard procedure for preparing flesh food. Pit cooking as well as stomach boiling were both denied. Blood went into the preparation of soup as did additional rendered grease. Although occasionally fixed by boiling, foetal animals were generally broiled, always in their entirety without the viscera being removed. A hunter did not neglect the opportunity to drink raw milk when he had slain an animal with full mammary glands.

As elsewhere in the northern forest the group recognized late September and October as a period suitable for meat drying. Now smudge fires could be neglecting without risking the danger of blow flies spoiling the food. For preservation women cut the meat of large game animals into long thin slices but ground hogs, minus the viscera, were dried in their entirety. Berries dried as they lay spread on a flat surface and, like other dehydrated foods, might be freshened again by soaking them in water. Skin bags contained pemmican, made of chopped meat and grease and without berries. The informant denied that viscera had ever been stuffed.

An entire family ate together, taking food from birch bark dishes. (Spruce bark was avoided because it imparted a pitchy taste to the food.) Periods of starvation visited the community not infrequently and sometimes resulted from caches ransacked by grizzly bears or other animal marauders. Only by quickly locating a well-stocked source of fish could famine be avoided. Cannibalism sometimes made an appearance in periods of starvation. The sight of much food promoted the tendency to overeat, especially following a period of limited rations. At such a time friends advised a hungry man to resume eating with caution, first offering him moose blood and pointing out that death might ensue if he ate meat straight off.

Frances Lake Kaska. No data on the food quest were sought from Frances Lake in-